

## GHANA

### **NATIONAL STATEMENT AT THE FIRST US-AFRICA LEADERS SUMMIT TO BE HELD IN WASHINGTON D.C., USA ON 6<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST, 2014.**

#### Introduction

Ghana welcomes the decision by President Barack Obama to convene this Summit. It is a historic and significant event. Ghana believes that the Summit provides an opportunity for the United States to deepen its engagement with Africa, and work closely with African Leaders to jointly address the challenges which continue to hinder Africa's accelerated development and sustained growth. Ghana further welcomes the convening of this Summit as we believe that it affords the Obama administration the opportunity to reaffirm its commitment to Africa's security, its democratic transformation and economic development, at both the regional and sub-regional levels.

At the sub-regional level, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), since its establishment in 1978, has made various efforts, through a number of key initiatives, to realise the objective of promoting economic integration in 'all fields of economic activity, particularly industry, transport, telecommunications, energy, agriculture, natural resources, commerce, monetary and financial questions, social and cultural.' However, the absence of sustained peace and security owing to conflicts in the sub-region, (as in much of Africa,) has undermined these efforts. This has fuelled a vicious cycle of conflict, under-development and poverty.

As a Member State of ECOWAS, Ghana has been at the forefront of efforts to establish peace in the sub-region, recognising that a multiplicity of factors have undermined those efforts.

On 28 March, 2014, President John Dramani Mahama of Ghana was unanimously elected Chairman of the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government, following the successful conclusion of the tenure of President Alassane Ouattara of la Cote d'Ivoire. Building on the work done by President Ouattara during his term as Chairman, President Mahama has made the issues of economic integration, peace and security, as well as the development and expansion of infrastructure, the focus of his tenure. Ghana believes that these issues, together with the availability of energy, will be critical for the acceleration of the socio-economic development of the sub-region.

#### Peace and Security

Ghana has been actively involved in, and supported international efforts to find a lasting solution to the crisis in Mali. Ghana has contributed in diverse ways to that end, bilaterally and multilaterally, through the contribution of critical support services and peacekeeping troops who offered technical assistance to the Africa-led International Mission to Mali (AFISMA). Ghana has also supported financially. Ghana believes that conflict management is a collective endeavour and will continue to be engaged, with the rest of ECOWAS and Development Partners, in Mali, to achieve the strategic objectives of restoring Mali's unity and territorial integrity, and the restoration of constitutional legality and order.

Ghana welcomes the progress being made in the restoration of peace, stability and democracy in Guinea-Bissau following the general elections held in that country in April this year. After years of political instability, the people of Guinea-Bissau have elected and inaugurated a new President and legislature. The people of Guinea-Bissau now have a chance to devote their energies to the task of nation-building and economic development. Ghana supports the choice of the people of Guinea-Bissau, and urges them to support the new President in building credible democratic institutions, and pursue economic development for the benefit of its people. Ghana will remain engaged in ensuring that democracy becomes firmly established in Guinea-Bissau.

A number of ECOWAS countries are due to hold general elections in 2015 and 2016. Cognizant of the correlation between peace and development, Ghana supports the peaceful conduct of elections, and urges ECOWAS Member States to ensure that national independent electoral institutions are fully empowered and accorded the independence to work with impartiality and transparency, so that the outcomes of elections would be peaceful and acceptable to all. Beyond this is the need to address the challenges inherent in the electoral process, including the effective management of the process and funding.

Ghana reaffirms its commitment to good governance, and to the ECOWAS Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance and other initiatives. Ghana also supports the *Open Government Partnership* (OGP), the multilateral initiative that aims to secure concrete commitments from Governments to promote transparency, empower citizens, fight corruption, and harness new technologies to strengthen governance.

Ghana, as well as the ECOWAS sub-region, continues to face mounting insecurity in its maritime jurisdiction. Illegal dumping of marine pollutants, piracy and armed robbery, unreported and unregulated fishing, illegal oil bunkering, among others, are not only depriving coastal states of needed revenue from their maritime resources, but they are also causing pollution, fuelling violence, feeding corruption, and destabilising peaceful societies. As part of efforts to address these challenges, ECOWAS, in June 2013, adopted the ECOWAS Integrated Maritime Strategy – a strategic framework for cooperation to eliminate these threats. The trans-boundary nature of these threats underscores the need for a multi-dimensional approach, and the need for cooperation, effective monitoring and coordination. Given its own experiences in the Gulf of Guinea, Ghana commends the United States of America for the critical support it offers to the sub-region, through joint maritime patrols with the Ghana Armed Forces and other national institutions.

Terrorism also remains a threat to the sub-region, especially in parts of Nigeria. Ghana condemns the activities of Boko Haram and other religious extremist groups in the sub-region. Ghana supports and appreciates the efforts being made to counter the threat, and welcomes the assistance of the United States and other Development Partners.

### Economic Integration

Ghana believes that the lack of adequate infrastructure remains an obstacle to the sub-region's socio-economic development and to the goal of full regional integration. Ghana therefore supports the African Union Programme for Infrastructure Development and urges that the issues of transport, energy and Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs) identified as priority areas are given greater attention.

Furthermore, in furtherance of the ECOWAS objective to accelerate the economic integration of the sub-region, Ghana supports the negotiations on EU-ECOWAS Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA), and believes that signing the EPA would not only grant ECOWAS Member States increased access to the EU market, but would also assist the sub-region to improve on its operational standards, accelerate the implementation of a harmonised tariffs system, and in general, accelerate the sub-region's economic integration and intra-regional trade. Ghana is confident that the on-going review of the EPA and the extended negotiations between ECOWAS and the EU, would remove the contentious aspects of the Agreement, and enable the Parties to arrive at a mutually acceptable conclusion, for implementation. Ghana also looks forward to the negotiations on the proposed Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA) between the United States and ECOWAS, as we believe that it has the potential to contribute to sub-regional economic integration.

### Theme of the Summit

There is no doubt that the above-stated efforts are underpinned by our desire to secure a better future for our youth, through education, the provision of basic amenities, and affordable health care. Ghana considers the theme of the US-Africa Leaders' Summit – *'Investing in the Next Generation'* appropriate. Ghana welcomes President Obama's Young African Leaders Initiative, (YALI), aimed at preparing the youth to take up the mantle of leadership, and congratulates the eighteen young Ghanaians selected to participate in the programme. We are confident that the skills they acquire will impact the future course of our country. The programme complements various initiatives of the Government of Ghana to benefit and empower the youth of Ghana, by equipping them to develop entrepreneurial skills for self-employment. We believe that this is important to address the growing incidence of youth unemployment in the country, and necessary to ensure that the youth do not engage in activities which could compromise the peace and stability of the country.

### Conclusion

Ghana looks forward to the forthcoming US-Africa Leaders' Summit, with expectations of vigorous discussions about Africa's priorities. Ghana shares the view that the Summit could mark a turning point in US-Africa relations, and become a credible platform for engagement, focused on enhancing the strategic partnership between the United States and Africa.